



Identifying the Center of Gravity of Afghan Mentoring

Major David H. Park, U.S. Army

The author dedicates this article to Brigadier Neil Baverstock (UK), and COL Bob Thorne (USA) who tried to enforce the teaching and assessing of MDMP to standard at the ANA Consolidated Fielding Center at Pol-e-Charki, Afghanistan throughout 2009.

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PHOTO: ANA Center of Gravity is the BDE commander and the BDE S3 commander, 1BDE, 207th Corps, May 2009, Camp Zafar, Herat, Afghanistan. Photo courtesy of the author.

WE FREQUENTLY HEAR American mentors speak of the “Afghan right.” Many of these mentors would quote: “*Better the Afghans do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war; and you are to help them, not to win it for them,*”¹ creatively quoting the famous axiom of Lawrence of Arabia. The problem is that these American mentors are using the famous quotation out of context. Some mentors use this phrase to state their chauvinistic belief that the Afghans will never achieve our standards, while others lean on this concept to cover up their inability or lack of desire to teach and mentor their Afghan counterparts.²

As explained by Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Bateman in the December 2008 issue of *Armed Forces Journal*, T.E. Lawrence was advising a band of guerrilla insurgents, not a regular army practicing counterinsurgency.³ Furthermore, the quotation, which was number 19 in a list of 27 pieces of advice published in a local British army journal in Egypt called *The Arab Bulletin*, starts with a disclaimer by Lawrence of Arabia himself:

The following notes have been expressed in commandment form for greater clarity and to save words. They are, however, only my personal conclusions, arrived at gradually while I worked in the Hejaz and now put on paper as stalking horses for beginners in the Arab armies. *They are meant to apply only to Bedu [Bedouin, the tribal nomads of the deserts]; townspeople or Syrians require totally different treatment.* They are, of course, not suitable to any other person's need, or applicable unchanged in any particular situation. Handling Hejaz Arabs is an art, not a science, with exceptions and no obvious rules. [Emphasis LTC Bateman's.]⁴

Aside from the obvious fact that Pashtuns and Tajiks are in no way related to Hejaz Arabs, except in sharing a common religion, we must also remember that Lawrence of Arabia was training a group of insurgent rebels, fighting against a counterinsurgent regular army of the Ottoman Empire during World War I, nearly a century ago. Transplanted to Afghanistan of 2009, he would

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be a Chechen mujahedeen advisor to the Taliban, rather than a coalition force mentor, building a regular army. Many coalition force mentors use the Lawrence quote without adequately understanding its context, thus allowing an “Afghan wrong” to continue, believing that they are perpetuating an “Afghan right.”⁵

Like it or not, the Afghan National Army (ANA) doctrine is a carbon copy of U.S. doctrine. We came in and set up its current army. U.S. military officers and contractors created the ANA’s doctrine and table of organization and equipment. If we are to make it work, the mentors must fully embrace teaching American operational doctrine to the Afghans. Afghans can fight.⁶ They need our assistance in building self-sustaining systems to establish a regular Army with full spectrum tactical and operational proficiency. We are not building a mujahedeen force to harass a Cold War foe anymore.

Most ANA units are highly centralized, top-down organizations, whose centers of gravity are their command and control systems, specifically corps and brigade S3 systems. The decisive point of mentoring is the transference of our command and control systems to these centers of gravity. If we teach command and control systems properly to the ANA, they will produce better operations orders and be more proficient. The result of this upward spiral in tactical and operational proficiency will be the successful completion of the coalition mentoring mission, allowing us to leave Afghanistan with success and honor.

Afghan Culture and Planning: “Afghan Right” or “Afghan Wrong?”

As a validator in the validation transition team within Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, I had the honor and the privilege of observing and assessing daily operations of 30 ANA units, including two brigade headquarters and 27 battalions belonging to all five ANA Corps, from late 2008 through late 2009. While these 30 units do not represent all of the ANA, their performances provide a valuable insight into the state of ANA readiness, as observed by one American officer, using a uniform standard on all 30 units. The following describes a typical Afghan planning process.

Question and answer planning process (Q&A PP). A typical ANA planning process begins when the brigade commander receives his mission from the corps commander on his cell phone. In my experience, upon telephonic receipt of the mission, instead of analyzing the mission in a systematic way, culminating in course of action development, the brigade commanders develop courses of action first. The entire staff and all of the battalion commanders would be called in for the mission brief and planning process. The brigade commanders regurgitate the higher echelon’s directive to their battalion commanders. Then they would add further detail to the order, without any staff analysis and input. Following this propagation of the hasty course of action, the battalion commanders in attendance and the primary staff would try to flesh out the mission by asking the brigade commander both pertinent and impertinent questions. (In all observed cases, battalion commanders were present in the initial and subsequent brigade planning sessions.)



Library of Congress, G. Eric and Edith Marston Photograph Collection, LC-DIG-matc-05605

From left to right, Colonel Lawrence, Emir Abdullah, Air Marshal Sir Geoffrey Salmond, and Sir Wyndham Deedes arriving at the 1920 Cairo Conference.

The brigade commanders would respond to these questions, essentially fleshing out tasks to subordinate units and staff on the spot. This question and answer session would last anywhere from two to five hours at a time. Sometimes the commanders or their mentors would call for another session for the following day, with similar results. I have named this process the “question and answer planning process” (Q&A PP). The Q&A PPs develop as a result of lack of planning. Subordinate commanders and staff members have to “pull” guidance and taskers out of the brigade commander, without using any systemic method whatsoever. Following one or more sessions of the Q&A PP, the S3 would retire to his office, where he would single-handedly produce an order, with or without his clerk’s help, within about one hour, using only his memory, because no one takes notes during a typical question and answer planning process. He would then publish the order the next day.

The following day, the subordinate commanders would return with questions about the mission. This would result in further Q&A PP, which may or may not result in a written fragmentary order, but would continue until all participants were either satisfied or exhausted. There would be no time for rehearsals at the end of this planning process. They sometimes would conduct pre-combat checks and pre-combat inspections haphazardly at the end of the day. Then, the operation would begin with no battle tracking at any echelon.

Commanders would be notified of significant activities via cell phone, and their tactical operations center would not keep a running log of activities. Some radio traffic would take place between forward units and the headquarters, but the tactical operations center generally would not track any of it, and no icons would denote maneuver unit dispositions on a map. Mentors were happy that the ANA was practicing its “Afghan right.” In fact, in all observed cases, following a typical Q&A PP, mentors encouraged holding another session the next day to answer further questions, sometimes leaving the Afghans alone to allow them to “plan better on their own.”⁷ If we continue to unintentionally promote these sessions by not intervening, we are directly abetting their adoption as the de facto planning process in large areas of Afghanistan.

If the Q&A PP results in a feasible, acceptable, suitable, and complete course of action, we should praise it as the “Afghan right.” However, in all of the cases I assessed, the Q&A PP simply wasted available planning time rather than contributing to the formation of a suitable course of action. In all observed cases, the ground commander scrapped the plans upon deployment, and formulated a new plan from scratch. Even though many coalition plans suffer the same fate upon contact, the complete decoupling of intelligence preparation of the battle field and other mission analysis products from course of action development prevents most ANA operations orders from even being a foundation for fragmentary orders. Officers simply do not base their courses of action on well-prepared intelligence and mission analysis. Therefore, it’s clear that the Q&A PP is an “Afghan wrong,” which simply burns up available planning time and causes undue fatigue among staff participants.

Nature of Afghan organizational culture. The decentralized “mission command” that U.S. and coalition forces practice is a fairly new phenomenon, enabled by a well-trained, highly educated officer and NCO corps of mostly Western armies.⁸ First practiced and perfected by German armies who called it “Auftragstaktik” in the last two centuries, the U.S. Army adopted it because we can make it work.⁹ However, most other armies in the world, including the ANA, do not have the independent-minded leaders that mission command needs to function properly. The Afghan organizational culture is not optimally aligned with mission command. Afghanistan is one of the most traditional societies in the world. Its people value the opinions of their elders and superiors more than individual common sense dictates. As most U.S. Soldiers learn, the Afghans value their tribal identities more than their national identity. Tribal elders make all decisions for the tribe in outlying areas, as countless U.S. mentors can attest after having attended numerous Tajik and Hazara shuras or Pashtun Jirgas.¹⁰ The military is a reflection of the society from which it springs, and it operates in the same way as the society it protects. The Afghan commander and his highest-ranking staff officers run ANA units in a strictly top-down, centralized manner, similar to how the local elders and imams run most villages in Afghanistan. This is why the

cell phone tasking by the commander, described above, is the principal means of mission tasking in the ANA.

Another characteristic of Afghan tribal governance is its emphasis on consensus building. Although elders do hold a great deal of power in Afghanistan's traditional culture, they adhere to building a group consensus through a long process of discussion during which people drink chai tea and voice their opinions and grievances.¹¹ The Australian counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen notes, "It is important to remember . . . that population groups in a traditional society exercise choices collectively, not individually . . . choices tend to reflect group consensus . . . [and] this tendency is even more pronounced in tribal societies under the stress of insurgency."¹² The tradition of chai drinking and consensus building is another cultural origin of the Q&A PP. These two seemingly contradictory characteristics, that of heavy-handed autocracy, and that of consensus building, form the foundation of Q&A PP.

We confirmed this theory of centralized, top-down leadership focused on consensus building during our

observations of Afghan units. The staff acted strictly in accordance with the commander's guidance, but engaged in long discussions rather than relying on quick, decisive action based on logical analysis. Company commanders were not empowered to make any real decisions without consulting their superiors. The only leaders able to make quick decisions were commanders several echelons above the actual leader on the ground. Many coalition mentors observed corps and brigade commanders calling company commanders directly on their cell phones, skipping the chain of command, to give detailed directives during actual operations.¹³ This easily overlooked practice has serious implications for our mentoring effort.

Second- and third-order effects of Q&A PP. By conducting a question and answer planning process that takes days to complete, without producing sound plans, the units we observed would regularly and grossly violate the 1/3-2/3 rule (in which time for preparation is allocated downward), giving the lower echelons no time to parallel plan at their level. At corps and brigade level, this deficiency prevented battalions from even having a chance to conduct



Lack of a dedicated mentor at the BDE S3 plans shop resulted in operational failure a week later, Camp Zafar, Herat, Afghanistan, May 2009.

Photo courtesy of the author

proper mission planning. Knowing this, subordinate battalion commanders made the effort to personally attend the brigade Q&A PP to remain in the loop about any planning and coordination that took place.

The second-order effect was that battalion mentors had no time to train and coach their counterparts in the MDMP, troop leading procedures, or pre-combat inspections before or during actual operations. As of 2009, battalion level mentors were the mainstay of our mentoring effort. They had the time and resources to influence the ANA planning cycle. Brigade mentors were generally dual tasked as actual coalition operations officers or XOs, so they were not fully engaged in mentoring. But due to Q&A PP consuming all available planning time at the brigade level, where little to no mentoring took place, the battalion mentors were left with literally no time to mentor their battalion commanders and staff, perpetuating this downward spiral of combat ineffective planning cycles.

The third-order effect was that junior officers never learned troop leading procedures or what “right” looks like, perpetuating the cycle of the “Afghan wrong” for the next generation of ANA officers. Believing they had their coalition mentors’ tacit support, the ANA units continued to practice Q&A PP. This is now the *de facto* planning process practiced at every level in some regions of Afghanistan.

Do we want this to continue? The result of this planning process is really a lack of planning, and zero production of quality operations orders. To increase the combat effectiveness of the ANA, mentors must take charge and continuously reinforce establishing the command and control warfighting function at corps and brigade level, to allow it to filter down the echelons.

Aligning Mentoring Methodology with Host Culture

The ANA is a highly centralized, top-down, leader-centric, consensus-seeking organization, mirroring the culture from which it originates. With that in mind, there are things we need to understand and actions we need to take to improve their effectiveness.

ANA center of gravity for mentoring. Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, defines centers of gravity as those characteristics, capabilities, or localities

Case in Point, May 2009

In the largest operation that I observed, a major offensive in Badghis Province in May 2009 (alternatively called “Operation Iron Fist,” “Operation Ghormach,” or “Operation Khora II” by ANA, U.S., and Italian officers at multiple echelons), 1/207 Brigade headquarters used six days to plan and write an operations order (without producing a mission statement). This excessively long planning session by the brigade gave the battalions and companies only one day to prepare prior to deploying to Badghis Province, which had not been cleared of Taliban presence since 2001. Despite the ANA battalion commanders’ best efforts, 3-1/207 Battalion lost an entire platoon to the insurgents during the push into the insurgent stronghold of Bala Mugharb. Platoon members not killed outright were tortured and beheaded by the local insurgents, while the coalition mentors watched helplessly across the valley. The loss was due to a lack of planning time allotted to the battalions and to the brigade S3’s insistence to personally control individual companies from various battalions in the main area of operation. The Italian battle group, in direct support, was barred by its own national caveat from providing more than one platoon at a time per operation, and, thus unable to assist the beleaguered ANA platoon.

A week after the massacre, the ANA 3-1/207 battalion commander was relieved of command, despite the fact that the brigade commander ordered the attack and prescribed the method of attack down to the smallest detail. The lieutenant commander in charge of the U.S. embedded transition team that had been training 3-1/207 Battalion was replaced by a captain with no battalion level planning and operations experience from a different team as the battalion moved into Badghis Province after the brigade-level planning in Herat. The mission dragged on for another month until the Italian and Spanish operational mentors and liaison teams rotated out, and U.S. embedded transition teams were dismantled and the 4/82d Advise and Assist Brigade moved in.¹⁴ With the entire Italian Operational Mentor and Liason Team, Spanish OMLT, and U.S. mentors rotating out of the theater simultaneously, the collective memory of this event is now lost, destined for continual annual repetition, as it has for several summers now.¹⁵ Here was an “Afghan wrong” allowed to continue to its inevitable conclusion.

from which a military force *derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight*. It adds:

The center of gravity is a vital analytical tool in the design of campaigns and major operations. Once identified, it becomes the focus of the commander's intent and operational design. Senior commanders describe the center of gravity in military terms, such as objectives and missions.¹⁶

Although we use the term "center of gravity" for tactical courses of action, we can use the same concept to identify the center of gravity of the ANA for mentoring purposes.

The ANA, being a highly centralized, top-down, consensus-seeking organization, derives its freedom of action, physical strength, and the will to fight from its commanders. The same can be said of coalition units, but given the cultural context, it is significantly more so for an ANA unit. Its corps lack a division echelon, so corps HQs command brigades. Therefore, the corps- and brigade-level command and control system is the decisive terrain for mentoring. The ANA corps and brigade affect the success or failure of their subordinates far more than in a Western army. Within this decisive terrain, as proper planning drives command and control, the commander and the G/S3 planning staff at corps and brigade level are the centers of gravity for mentoring. Therefore, the commander's intent and operational design of coalition mentoring must focus on this center of gravity.

Decisive point of mentoring. If security transition is our prime mission in Afghanistan, then deliberate and planned mentoring is the right methodology.¹⁷ If the ANA is a top-down, leader-centric, consensus-seeking organization, and corps- and brigade-level commanders and G/S3 staff the centers of gravity, what is our decisive point for mentoring? Where do we mass our Soldiers and resources to accomplish our end state?

If security transition is our prime mission in Afghanistan, then deliberate and planned mentoring is the right methodology.

Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, defines a decisive point as:

A geographic place, specific key event, or enabling system that allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an enemy and greatly influence the outcome of an attack. Decisive points are not centers of gravity; they are keys to attacking or protecting them. . . Decisive points shape operational design and allow commanders to select objectives that are clearly defined, decisive, and attainable . . . Events, such as commitment of the enemy operational reserve, may also be decisive points. Once identified and selected for action, decisive points become objectives.¹⁸

For mentoring, if corps- and brigade-level commanders and planning S3 staff are the centers of gravity, then *the successful teaching of the MDMP is our decisive point* for a mentoring victory. Once corps and brigade produce the right plan for battalions to execute, it will be a matter of time until battalions are able to do the same. Eventually, with planning and operations systems maturing, U.S. and coalition mentors will be able to truly stand off and provide combat enablers only.

Product-focused MDMP. The Afghan army does not purposefully avoid using the MDMP. Contracted U.S. instructors currently teach it to them during two-week courses in regional training centers. The problem is that the ANA will rotate students through during a given course, consisting of 177 PowerPoint slides, to keep their day-to-day operations going.¹⁹ If mentors are not deeply involved, up to 14 different people over two weeks could be attending its course in one officer's slot. Following the schooling, ANA still finds the MDMP process foreign to their organizational culture. This is where the mentors must step in.²⁰

Mentors have to demonstrate *all* the different tools available within the MDMP. Good mentors can teach one technique per mission, or one a week, until the Afghan staff is ready to put it all together.²¹ This is a time and energy consuming process, but it should be the heart and soul of mentoring at the brigade and corps level. By focusing on MDMP products, and not the process, we can make the system more palatable to our Afghan allies. Instead of focusing on the ANA doing every sub-step of MDMP, we

need to focus them on appreciating the usefulness of individual MDMP products, because they help the ANA plan better, resulting in more successful combat operations.

Some MDMP products whose benefits must be emphasized are:

- Commander's planning timeline.
- Proper commander's guidance.
- Modified combined obstacles overlay.
- Doctrinal template.
- Situational template.
- Enemy course of action statements and sketches.²²
- Restated mission based on analysis of specified, implied, essential tasks.
- Friendly course of action statements and sketches.
- Synchronization matrix.²³
- Warning orders contributing to parallel planning at lower echelons.
- Operations and fragmentary orders.²⁴

We must remember that MDMP is a means to an end, only a process, a methodology. Proper planning and execution through a well-thought-out order is its end state. The MDMP is not something we can contract out for a two-week course. This is something that must be learned hands-on, through dedicated mentoring.

Mentoring is more than advising. It is a full-time process through the planning, preparation, execution, and assessment cycle. We cannot expect our ANA counterparts to be proficient in it after attending a single contracted course. In fact, most of the staff primaries had already attended the coalition course in MDMP when we observed them. They had not retained much from the courses. Daily, continuous mentoring at every echelon must reinforce the MDMP. We need mentors who understand the MDMP, know how to teach it, and have the patience to train their counterparts daily.²⁵

Afghan culture as an enabler. The Afghan cultural affinity for autocracy and consensus-building by elders does not have to be an impediment to the growth of the ANA. We can use it to leverage the teaching of MDMP and the development of proper staff systems. When staff sections are properly educated in what their final products should look like, and when battalion- and brigade-level executive officers and deputy commanders learn how the

MDMP is supposed to flow, their cultural affinity for discussion and group consensus will help them develop doctrinally sound courses of action. The unit commander and the XO, once they know what "right" looks like, can shape the discussion, and prevent Q&A PP from occurring, thereby creating effective planning sessions.

The decisive point for mentors. In each region, the ANA's corps and brigade command and control elements (commander plus the G/S3 shop) are the centers of gravity where all important decisions are made, affecting every echelon beneath them. The decisive point for mentors is teaching the MDMP to the command and control element, allowing for proper planning and operations systems development and setting the conditions for tactical proficiency.

The teaching of MDMP has not been the top priority for most mentors. Coalition mentors generally act as liaison officers and instructors for low-level tactics, techniques, and procedures. They are excellent at teaching small arms marksmanship and buddy rush lanes. Successive teams of mentors have taught ANA units mostly individual- and squad-level skills for years, while neglecting battalion- and brigade-level planning process. This is the case because our mentors are not selected based on a specific end state.²⁶

If we accept that the ANA can fight well, but needs help building unit-level systems, we must select mentors based on the end state desired. Brigade and corps command and control systems are the centers of gravity in our mentoring effort. We must place our best mentors in those billets and leverage the Afghan cultural affinity for seeking consensus to build their staff systems. The following are recommendations for improving the mentoring effort:

- Assign maneuver, fires, and effects majors or lieutenant colonels with actual S3 experience in active duty Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) units as full-time additional corps- and brigade-level planning advisors. Placing an officer who has never performed these crucial jobs in a full-time environment in a TO&E unit into an S3 mentor position tells our Afghan counterparts that we do not consider the S3 function important. (Currently, some of the brigade- and corps-level mentors are dual-tasked as coalition brigade combat team staff members, limiting their effectiveness)

- Assign four additional mentors at the corps: G3 shop, G3 chief of operations, chief of training, and chief of planning. Many ANA corps-level G3 planning chiefs do not have mentors assigned to them. These three areas—operations, training, and planning—are crucial and resource intensive enough that they warrant separate field grade mentors. Currently, one officer mentors all of them, with a corresponding level of result. In 2009, the 209th Corps had one Italian major and one U.S. National Guard lieutenant colonel, augmented by contractors, to assist the corps G3 shop. But as they were dual tasked as S3s in their respective brigades, their effectiveness was severely limited.

- Assign three additional mentors at the brigade: S3, S3 training, and S3 plans. These mentors must be majors who have performed at that level in the U.S. Army.

- Adopt a larger mentor-team structure, mirroring the NATO operational mentor and liaison team structure. Currently, such NATO teams are deploying an actual battalion commander and his staff, with a dedicated security force, allowing the the teams to

mentor far more effectively, at least from a systemic point of view. Numerous U.S. mentoring units are severely undermanned and undertrained in systems development.

- We should develop a mentor-taught program of instruction for ANA staff at respective echelons as well as an assessment recordkeeping system to enable follow-on teams to pick up where the last team left off. Right now, many teams reinvent the wheel each year due to a lack of a uniform program of instruction, regularly assessed in accordance with a uniform standard. Most mentors do not know what to teach, nor how to teach, and revert to their comfort zone, teaching basic rifle marksmanship and buddy rushes over and over.

We are not developing a band of insurgents as Lawrence of Arabia did. We are developing a regular national army. Thus, we must embrace teaching MDMP at all levels. Remember, Afghans can fight. They need our help in building systems to become a self-sustaining army that can operate without mentors. Only then can we go home with success and honor.²⁷ **MR**

NOTES

1. LTC Robert L. Bateman addresses this often-misquoted adage in his article found at <www.afji.com/2008/12/3801570>. However, his main idea and aim is different. Permission obtained from LTC Bateman to quote him and mention his article, 17 February 2010 via AKO email.

2. Similar chauvinistic sentiments were expressed against the South Korean Army in 1953 by KMAG (U.S. Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea). Calling Korean soldiers as having "archaic beliefs and superstitions, and generally lacking in mechanical skills," some U.S. advisors wanted the ROK Army to adopt English as its official language to make it easier for the U.S. advisors. Robert D. Ramsey, III, *Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam and El Salvador* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), 13. Since then, South Korea has deployed its Army overseas in 22 countries in support of the U.S. and UN, to include 325,000 soldiers to Vietnam, 20,000 to Iraq, and 3,400 in Afghanistan. <www.mnd.go.kr/mndPolicy/globalArmy/news/index.jsp?topMenuNo=2&leftNum=19-3-Bateman>.

3. Ibid.

5. I credit LTC Tony Leal, NMNG, RCAC-West, and LTC Haydon, Deputy RCAC-West, 2008-2009, for personally teaching and showing me what empirical "Afghan wrong" is and should look like.

6. COL Baer, the Validation Transition Team Chief, Task Force Phoenix first used this phrase in 2008, in his final "VTT Brief" to all incoming U.S. mentors in late 2008.

7. Leal and Haydon.

8. The concept of "mission command" is thoroughly explained in U.S. Army FM 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office [GPO]), and ANA FM 1-3.6 *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: GPO).

9. David M. Keithly and Stephen P. Ferris, "Auftragstaktik, or Directive Control, in Joint and Combined Operations," *Parameters* (Autumn 1999): 118-33.

10. Ali Wardak, "A Traditional Means of Conflict Resolution in Afghanistan," United Nations Public Access Network, 4-5. Accessible at <<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/acpity/unpan017434.pdf>>.

11. Ibid.

12. Kimberly Marten, "The Danger of Tribal Militias in Afghanistan: Learning from the British Empire," *Columbia University Journal of International Affairs* 63.1 (Fall/Winter 2009): 159. Quote taken directly from Ms. Marten's quote of Kilcullen.

13. Practiced routinely in both 1st and 2d Brigades of ANA 207th Corps, throughout the spring and summer of 2009 in Herat, Farah, and Badghis Provinces, as observed and noted by the author, the then Chief of VTT-Western Afghanistan.

14. Based on my personal observation of the corps- and brigade-level planning process from 26 April to 8 May 2009, and on my interview of CPT Thomas Beyerl, Team Chief, 3/1/207 Embedded Transition Team, conducted 16 October 2009 at Camp

Phoenix, Afghanistan, as well as another interview of CPT Ray Gabriel, executive officer of the Badghis Provincial Police Mentor Team, and SFC David Easley, the PMT NCOIC, conducted 8 October 2009, also at Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan.

15. U.S. active duty units serve 12 months in Afghanistan; national guard units, 9 months; Italians 6 months; and Spaniards, 4 months. RC-West in August of 2009 saw all four elements of the coalition rotated out simultaneously within a five-week period in a rare convergence of timing.

16. U.S. Army FM 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO), para. 6-35, 6-8.

17. COL (Ret.) Dave Prugh, who served 75 total months in Afghanistan as an officer then as a contractor, recently as the civilian SME for J3 Validation, CSTC-A, makes a good case arguing that the Army has imprudently placed National Guard units in charge of mentoring, and active duty units in charge of security, when it should have been the other way around. Available at <<http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/413-prugh.pdf>>, 15-16.

18. U.S. Army FM 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO), para 6-56, 6-11.

19. When I asked numerous ANA battalion and company commanders and their primary staff why they rotated different students through the course instead of sending the same ones daily so they could learn, the stated consensus among the leaders was that commanders and staff primaries were needed at their desks to operate the unit. The reality was that they sent their assistants and replacements to the class because they could, and no one stopped them.

20. David H. Park, "Teaching TLPs to Afghan Company Commanders," *Infantry Magazine* (May-August 2010), 13-18, or <https://www.benning.army.mil/magazine/2010/2010_2/MAY-AUG%2010.pdf>.

21. Much progress in this area occurred when Combined Training Advisor Group-Afghanistan under BG Neil Baverstock (UK) created Counterinsurgency Handbooks/Workbooks at the brigade, battalion, and company levels in the summer of 2009. These handbooks contained easily actionable "cheat cards" that ANA officers could use to quickly apply doctrinal methodology during the planning and execution phases of combat operations.

22. Most ANA intel officers know how to make these, but due to commander's failure to conduct proper MDMP, these products are almost never incorporated into planning.

23. In my experience, this is the most difficult single item to teach, but with the highest potential payoff for unit operation.

24. Park, 13-18.

25. Prugh, 15-16.

26. Ibid.

27. "Success and Honor" is the motto of U.S. Forces-Iraq during Operation New Dawn, the final redeployment from Iraq, 2010-2011.